

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (currently amended): A manufacturing method according to claim 3, wherein, of an iron-based sintered body having iron as its principal component, characterized in that sintering is performed in a gas atmosphere containing indium vapor or indium, and during said sintering, the iron-based sintered body is provided with a rustproof outer surface containing 0.01 to 5at% of indium.

Claim 5 (previously presented): A method according to claim 4, wherein said sintering is performed in a furnace under a hydrogen gas atmosphere.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A method according to claim 5, wherein the furnace is a batch type atmospheric furnace and said sintering is performed to the iron-based body at a sintering temperature of 1150°C for 60 minutes.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A method according to claim 5, wherein, during said sintering, indium vapor is introduced into the furnace.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A method according to claim 5, wherein, during said sintering, a compound that contains indium and that decomposes with the heat of sintering is introduced into the furnace.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A method according to claim 8, wherein the compound is indium suboxide (In_2O).

Claim 10 (currently amended): A manufacturing method according to claim 3, of an iron-based sintered body having iron as its principal component, characterized in that sintering is performed in a gas atmosphere containing indium vapor or indium, and further comprising the steps of mixing graphite powder with iron powder to form a powder mixture consisting essentially of iron and graphite and molding the mixture into said iron-based body, and then thereafter, performing said sintering step to said iron-based body.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A manufacturing method according to claim 3, of an iron-based sintered body having iron as its principal component, characterized in that sintering is performed in a gas atmosphere containing indium vapor or indium, and further comprising the steps of mixing graphite powder with iron powder and a metallic soap to form a powder mixture consisting essentially of iron, graphite and metallic soap, and molding the mixture into said iron-based body, and then thereafter, performing said sintering step to said iron-based body.

Claim 12 (previously presented): An iron-based sintered body, comprising a sintered body having iron as its principal component and having an outer surface, said outer surface containing 0.01 to 5at% of indium to provide said sintered body with a rustproof outer surface.

Claim 13 (previously presented): An iron-based sintered body according to claim 12, wherein, except for said indium on said outer surface, said sintered body consists essentially of iron and graphite.

Claim 14 (previously presented): An iron-based sintered body according to claim 12, wherein, except for said indium on said outer surface, said sintered body consists essentially of iron, graphite and a metallic soap.

Claim 15 (previously presented): An iron-based sintered body according to claim 14, wherein said metallic soap is selected from the group consisting of metallic soap stearate, metallic soap propionate, and metallic soap naphthenate.

Claim 16 (previously presented): An iron-based sintered body according to claim 14, wherein said metallic soap is selected from the group consisting of zinc stearate, indium stearate, bismuth stearate, nickel stearate, cobalt stearate, copper stearate, and manganese stearate.